

# EXHIBIT

## “19”



Rabbi Arnold Rachlis, D.D.

December 2, 2019

Honorable Judge Gorton  
United States District Court  
District of Massachusetts  
1 Courthouse Way  
Boston, Massachusetts 02210

Honorable Judge Gorton,

My name is Rabbi Arnold Rachlis and I have been the spiritual leader of University Synagogue since 1987. I have been Michelle Janavs' Rabbi for the past 16 years. Over that time, I have been very involved with Michelle and her family including presiding over the marriages of both her brother and sister, the Bar Mitzvahs of two of her nephews and countless family gatherings outside of the synagogue to celebrate festive occasions like baby namings and holidays. On these occasions, I have witnessed Michelle as a dedicated mother, daughter, sister, aunt and friend.

Michelle and her family became members of my synagogue after their move to Southern California in 2002. This wonderful family has embraced the true meaning of tzedakah, the Hebrew word for philanthropy and giving. Both of Michelle's parents were Jewish immigrants from Iran who, having suffered much discrimination, came to the United States in search of a better life. Michelle grew up in a struggling middle-class family. Her parents, like so many generations of immigrants before them, were true patriots. They worked hard and tried to raise their children with the American ideals of good citizenship and a deep sense of responsibility for our neighbors and our community.

As I have become close with Michelle and her family, I have witnessed the most generous and sincere philanthropy that spans four generations, with Michelle and her children embracing the strong values and dedicated efforts that have made our community a better place. Since the sale of Chef America, Michelle's family's frozen food company, Michelle and her entire family have donated tens of millions of dollars and, more importantly, created programs supporting universities, scholarships and schools serving minority children and hospitals. As an example, Michelle's 96-year-old grandmother has given over \$17 million to American-Jewish causes, including local community centers and synagogues. Her parents gifted \$30 million to the University of California, Irvine, including hundreds of scholarships to deserving students.

**A Reconstructionist Congregation**

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Michelle is no different. Her focus and hands-on dedication to ending child hunger in our county has been beyond admirable. She helped raise millions of dollars for the community food bank. In addition, she personally created programs to increase awareness of child hunger among thousands of children and their families. Other programs she established provided children in the community with opportunities to volunteer individually. Because of the examples Michelle has set, both of her daughters have also been heavily involved in charity. Starting at the age of nine, [REDACTED] worked side-by-side with her mother to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Second Harvest Food Bank. Her younger teenage daughter, [REDACTED] took all profits from a shoe accessory company that she started in 2017 that, to date, has donated over \$26,000 to the Crisis Text Line, a teen mental health and suicide prevention organization.

Michelle's dedication to her entire family has also been exemplary. In addition to being a tirelessly devoted mother, she has been willing to sacrifice her own well-being to support all others in her family in times of need. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Michelle is her daily companion, bringing light and laughter into her mother's life.

I also personally witnessed Michelle's invaluable support of her brother's children when he went through a difficult divorce. He was given 100% custody of his three children and, as a full-time working father, could not have coped without Michelle's active and daily care and support for his children.

When I first heard about the college admissions scandal, I was shocked to hear about Michelle's involvement. Michelle's focus on family, charity and selflessness are her defining qualities and I believe that she lost sight of her principles because of blind love for her children. Just the other day, Michelle sat in my office and shed many tears, as she spoke about the pain that she has inflicted on her children and family and she expressed tremendous remorse for her decision. I see that she has embraced the spirit of what Judaism calls T'shuva, acknowledging wrongdoing and atoning for one's sins. I respectfully ask that you see her as I do and allow her to continue to be an active and contributing participant in her family and community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Arnold Rachlis